

Make what you want with what you've got

Feeling a little bit guilty over that latest luxury yarn purchase? Stash management getting to be all too much? Maybe it's time to economise. That's what Adelaide knitter **SARAH GOLDER** did a few years back when she and her husband bought a house and simultaneously became a one-income family. Combine that with what Sarah calls her naturally thrifty tendencies, and she's the logical choice to write YARN's column on the craft of creating within your means.

As a hobby, knitting is a lot cheaper than renovating houses or collecting old cars. It's also very satisfying: from the simple act of making something to making something unlike anything anyone else has got; from wearing something you made yourself to choosing colours that you love.

But choosing from the lovely yarns online or at the

I began to pick up thrifty ways when I was a kid, maybe learning from our next door neighbour. She saved everything: the down feathers from her pet duck would make a pillow and even a good piece of sticky tape could be stuck on the door to be used another time.

The point is, nearly everything can be used more than once: water used to wash clothes can be used again on the garden; bread bags can be used to wrap your lunch; vegetable

scraps can be made into compost or fed to chooks (and then recycled again as garden fertiliser).

The same applies to knitting. Try to see the potential in what you already have and make use of it. Look again at all the yarn you have in your stash. Think of little things to make with odds and ends or ways to combine the bits into something bigger.

Maybe you *don't* have much yarn in your cupboards. Plunder your old jumpers! Can they be pulled apart and reknitted into something you'd wear more?

When you do buy, buy smart. One of my mother's favourite sayings has always been 'Buy the best you can afford'. That may be 8-ply acrylic, but with the right attitude, you can do a lot with it! Or if budget yarn doesn't appeal, there's always the op shop.

In its print debut in December, this column will begin to explore budget yarncraft: buying sale yarn; making

great garments out of leftovers; the best projects using just one ball of expensive, exquisite yarn; recycling old jumpers and using items from charity stores; and what to do with all those different balls of yarn people give you when they find out you knit. I love the challenge of being given a bag of assorted yarn and figuring out how best to use it. It is especially satisfying when someone says, 'Did you knit this? It's beautiful.'

And while you're being thrifty, you're still having fun. Knitting with a group of friends is a cheap night out and it's never boring, especially after you add some good food and wine to the mix (although that might not make it the cheapest night out you'll ever have).

I love knitting gifts, long-lasting jumpers and socks, and creating clothes that are unique and well-suited to the person I make them for. A knitted gift can cost little in monetary terms but the result always means the special someone receives the product of your time, creativity and personality.

Cute woolly things for babies are good fun to make. If you don't know any babies to knit for, charity organisations will welcome your efforts.

People often throw away things that could be put to good use somehow, while many people around the world still go without. If we stop to think about ways to use the earth's resources more carefully and to re-use what we've already got, there will be more to go around. And the world will be a better place as well.

So, what better place to start practising this than knitting? *Y*

YARN on a shoestring

sarah golder

local shop can easily get a bit pricey. So how do you keep it under control?

It might be cheaper to go and buy several jumpers from a shop than to buy 15 balls of good quality yarn but a jumper you knit yourself is better value—it will be better quality, it will last much longer, and it will mean a lot more. You'll also be less likely to throw it out.

It might cost \$10–12 to knit a pair of socks, but a good hand-knitted pair will be the most comfortable socks you will ever wear. They will also outlast almost anything you could buy ready-made. When *Yarn's* pattern editor Melissa finally parted with a pair of much-loved and much darned socks they were 23 years old! (That's about 128 in human years.)

Knitting doesn't have to be an expensive hobby. It can actually save you money and be a fantastic way to express your thrifty tendencies.